



# the gull

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## December GGAS Program

**BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK**

**WILDLIFE ART BENEFIT DRAWING**

**BIRDING CHRISTMAS COOKIE BAKE-OFF**

The Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing will be preceded by a program devoted to Big Bend National Park presented by Hillary Hulen, GGAS executive director. Truly a naturalists' paradise, this 700,000-acre park contains a complete mountain range, the Chisos Mountains, within its boundaries and is surrounded by the vast expanses of the Chihuahuan desert. Formerly a park ranger at Big Thicket National Preserve in Texas, Hillary has traveled extensively throughout Texas.

Following the program wine and cheese will be served, accompanied by Birding Christmas Cookies and then at last . . . the Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing. Please note the change in time to 7 p.m. Note also that any winner present will be able to choose his/her prize.

Don't miss this special holiday meeting, **Thursday, Dec. 8, at 7 p.m.**, at the Nature Company's 4th Street Center in the Wrubel Gallery (4th and Hearst, next to Spenger's) and don't forget your bird Christmas cookies. Please **RSVP** if you plan to attend so we can plan accordingly. Seating is limited to 75.

## January Program—Fort Mason Center

The Gray Whales are coming! A cetacean expert from the Whale Center will present a slide program on the migration and ecology of Gray Whales, from the breeding grounds in Arctic waters to the calving grounds in Baja.

## Christmas Bird Count Calendar

**Saturday, December 17—Point Reyes.** For information phone Bill Lenartz at 457-1642.

**Sunday, December 18—Oakland.** Please see p. 189.

**Wednesday, December 21—San Francisco.** Please see p. 190.

**Tuesday, December 27—Los Banos.** Please see p. 190.

For information phone or write to the GGAS office.

## Field Trips Calendar

**Saturday, December 10—Stockton, Lodi and Thornton.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Stockton Sewage Ponds at the main gate. From the Bay Area take Hwy. 580 to Hwy. 4 (Charter Way) in Stockton. Go west on Hwy. 4 about 1.5 miles to the entrance to the Sewage Ponds. We will bird at the Stockton Sewage Ponds, then caravan to the Lodi Sewage Ponds and to Thornton to look for cranes. Dress warmly and be prepared for rain. Bring lunch. Leader: David Yee (209-951-1526). (✓)

**Wednesday, December 14—Mini-trip to Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland.** Meet at the marsh at 9:30 a.m. Take the Nimitz or Warren freeway to Hegenberger Rd. and go just past Leet over a small bridge. Immediately at the end of bridge is an unmarked road with a small parking lot. This is the beginning of an interesting level walk of about three-quarters of a mile. We will see ducks, herons and shorebirds at close range. Leaders: Delpha deTimofeev and Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9053 and leave a message. She will contact you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelly (387-8290) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## Nominations

At the November meeting of the GGAS board of directors a nominating committee was appointed. Your suggestions for nominees are eagerly solicited. Please send your recommendations to the committee in care of the GGAS office. You might even send in your own name if you are interested in getting more directly involved. Why not?

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## Late September and October Observations — through October 26

### MARINE

The high surface water temperatures continued into October. At SE Farallon Island (from which all reports are by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory), the water temperature steadily rose to an all-time record of 18.0°C on Oct. 10. Then it immediately dropped as gusty northwest winds sprang up, after which no warm water pelagic birds were seen there. Off Monterey, similar El Niño conditions persisted to the same time, when near-offshore current reversed from northward to southward flow. Except in the Monterey Bay storm-petrel flocks, most early-fall and warm-water pelagic birds disappeared from the usual route of Monterey boat trips (SFB, mob) and storm-petrels were no longer widely scattered (SFB).

Before this shift, many Northern Fulmars arrived at the end of September and by mid-late October Fulmars were abundant at Monterey and offshore (SFB, mob). The only Flesh-footed Shearwater was off Monterey Oct. 2 (JML, GMcC, et al.). Single Short-tailed Shearwaters were found by most boats and by mid-October about five per day was normal (mob). Black-vented Shearwaters peaked at about **100** off Monterey Sept. 24 (DLS, et al.) and about ten or so were seen on most boats (mob). At SE Farallon, six passed Sept. 22 and two Sept. 25. Some were seen from Pebble Beach, San Mateo County, Oct. 21 (AH).

One Black Storm-Petrel Oct. 7 was at SE Farallon, where this species was first recorded this August. Black and Ashy Storm-Petrels in the Monterey Bay flocks were in the normal high numbers through the period with 10-15,000 being typical maximum estimates for the total (DLS, mob). The unprecedented numbers of **Least Storm-petrels** continued to swell in the Monterey Bay flocks, with estimates up to 500 Oct. 2 (JML, GMcC, et al.) and Oct. 15 (AS, SFB, et al.). A few Forked-tailed Storm-Petrels occurred with the others, but after the current shift only in the flocks (mob). On Oct. 15 at least five were there (SFB, et al.). A **Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel** four to six miles west of Point Piños Oct. 2 was not in a flock (RS, KK, et al.). It was Northern California's third. A White-rumped Storm-Petrel in the flocks Oct. 9 was thought to be a Wedge-rumped, but some doubt lingered (mob). Subsequently, the fall's only certain Wilson's Storm-Petrels were found in the flocks Oct. 15 (BB, TC, SFB, AS, mob). A sick Ashy Storm-Petrel was picked up on the night of Oct. 16 at the Oakland Army Base (fide JZ).



We assume that the sub-adult **Brown Booby**, Northern California's first, that roosted on Seal Rock, SE Farallon Island, Sept. 24-28, was related to El Niño, but then why was it the only booby to reach California this fall?!

Arctic Terns do not usually migrate close to the SE Farallon, but apparently El Niño brought them inshore this fall; daily counts of 300-500 occurred Sept. 16, 17, 20 and 27. Stragglers occurred to Oct. 8, just before the surface water change. Thirteen **Craveri Murrelets** were counted off Monterey Sept. 30 (SFB, et al.) and about 40 were estimated Oct. 2 (RG, et al.).

### COSTAL AND INTERIOR WATERBIRDS

Nineteen Cattle Egrets were at Año Nuevo Oct. 22 (RL). Solitary White-faced Ibises were sighted at the mouth of Salmon Creek Oct. 4 (BDP) and at Pescadero Oct. 15 (BR, BG). A stray Sandhill Crane inhabited pastures between Point Reyes Station and Inverness Park from the first week of October to the 23rd (TAB, mob).

Mountain Plovers visited the field on the northeast side of the RCA Station at Point Reyes, where they have been seen before. Three were there Oct. 2 (RT), an impressive 21 on Oct. 9 (KH) and one on Oct. 14 (RS). Elkhorn Slough's Sharp-tailed Sandpiper remained to Sept. 21 (RS, et al.) and four more were found, a fine showing. They were at Pescadero Sept. 21-Oct. 3 (RS, mob), Bodega Bay Sept. 22 (DE, JH), Mendoza Ranch pond Oct. 7 (BR, KHi, MW, JW, JM, et al.) and a different individual at Spaletta Ranch Oct. 15-18 (JM, mob). The Stilt Sandpiper stayed at Pescadero through Sept. 21 (RS, et al.).

It will be news when the rare gulls *don't* return to the Stockton Sewage Ponds in the fall. The **Common Black-headed Gull** was rediscovered Oct. 11 and seen again Oct. 26 (both DY). The **Little Gull** was spotted Oct. 18 and 26 (DY). Both are back for at least their sixth year! It is probably that both were present but undetected for at least one year prior to their discovery; they were more than a year old when found and most stray birds are in their first year. Such a first-year Franklin's Gull was also at Stockton Sewage Ponds Oct. 26 (DY). A Black Tern visited Bodega Bay Oct. 14-15 (DG, NC).

### RAPTORS

Two Black-shouldered Kites on SE Farallon Oct. 3 were only the fourth record for the island. Broad-winged Hawks passed the Point Diablo hawk lookout as follows (all CF, et al.): two on Sept. 20, 14 on Sept. 28, four on Oct. 1, one on Oct. 2, two on Oct. 4 and one on Oct. 6. Elsewhere single Broad-wings were noted at Point Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 1 (HG, et al.) and over Bodega Head Oct. 4 (BDP).

## SMALLER BIRDS

Late September was highlighted by a period of prolonged coastal overcast with light winds, ideal weather for the arrival and accumulation of vagrant landbirds. The big wave hit Sept. 25-26 when the numbers of eastern vagrants arriving on SE Farallon were 15 and ten, respectively, and those found on the mainland (mainly Point Reyes and San Francisco) were 25 and 15. Although arrivals tapered off over the next week, many birds lingered for several days. The first week of October featured unsettled weather bracketed by frontal systems. Moderate numbers of vagrants arrived throughout this period, but most stayed less time. A heavy, medium-low overcast associated with a storm that bypassed us deposited a fine wave on the coast (but not on SE Farallon) Oct. 7-8, still with rapid nightly turnover. About 17 easterners one day and 16 the next arrived on the mainland. This wave tapered off over the next two days, as the mostly fair weather of mid and late-October took control. This slowed but did not halt the flow of vagrants, which trickled through slowly, except for a gap Oct. 12-13 and a smallish wave Oct. 14-15 (mainland) and Oct. 15-16 (SE Farallon). By this time the transition to mainly later-fall vagrants, Palm Warblers and Sparrows had occurred.

A Ringed Turtle Dove on SE Farallon Oct. 15-16 proves that this bird can stray substantial distances from its point of escape. White-winged Doves continue to favor Mendoza Ranch on Point Reyes. One was found dead there Oct. 4 (JR, et al.). A flock of two there Oct. 8-9 (BDP, et al.) grew to four Oct. 10-15 (RJ, mob) of which only three were seen Oct. 16. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo arrived on SE Farallon Sept. 25 and a Common Poorwill there Oct. 15 was the third Island record. A Chimney Swift on SE Farallon Sept. 25 constituted the second fall record there; most have been between late May and early July. A female Calliope Hummingbird was well-described from Road Forks Pool, Point Reyes, Oct. 22 (BY), an astoundingly late date. A Lewis' Woodpecker on Sept. 20 provided SE Farallon's third record in fall and a flock of 28 passed the Point Diablo lookout Oct. 3 (CF). The "Red-naped" Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker occurred on SE Farallon for the third time (second in fall) Sept. 28. This fall's first two "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flickers found SE Farallon Oct. 3.

A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** on SE Farallon Sept. 27-28 is now a specimen in the California Academy of Sciences, the first for California and the state's second record. A calling flycatcher at Fish Docks Oct. 2 was also identified as a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and was well described (WG, AH, AG, DL). Six more Least Flycatchers on SE Farallon brought the Island's total this fall to an amazing **nine**: Sept. 22, 23, 25, Oct. 2, 5, 18. Point Reyes added three, different individuals at the Lighthouse trees Sept. 24 (LCB, et al.) and Sept. 25-27 (JM, mob) and one



photographed at Nunes Ranch Oct. 11 (AG) and identified later (JM). SE Farallon's **Great Crested Flycatcher** Oct. 2 was midway in the species' very brief period of occurrence in California. At least seven Tropical Kingbirds visited our coast. The first arrivals were at North Lake, Golden Gate Park, Sept. 25 (MD, JMS, EM, AM) and at Abandoned Ranch, Point Reyes, Sept. 26 (RS, LCB), then on Oct. 2 one in Lincoln Park, San Francisco (ARi). One at Drakes Beach Oct. 6 (SL, et al.) was probably the same one seen just uphill toward Hall Ranch Oct. 8-9 (BDP, et al.). The other three were another at North Lake Oct. 14 (ARi) and singles Oct. 21 at Fish Docks (BY, GF) and Año Nuevo (JMS, AH).

A Clark's Nutcracker Sept. 28 was only the third for SE Farallon and the other two were in 1972, which was *the* fall for irruptive montane species in coastal California. Sage Thrashers landed on SE Farallon Sept. 29 and Oct. 5. After a Philadelphia Vireo's visit on Sept. 26, there have been only about six records for SE Farallon, yet this scarce vagrant is being reported with greatly increased frequency by mainland observers. It's strange. Four or five coastal individuals were reported this month. One in the Point Reyes Willows Sept. 26-27 (RS, LCB, et al.) was joined on the 27th by another (WG, et al.), which very possibly was the same bird seen at Mendoza Ranch Sept. 26 (RS, LCB). The other Philadelphia Vireo reports were at Point Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 3 (BDP, BR, et al.) and at North Lake, Golden Gate Park, Oct. 4 (JMS).

The table of vagrant warblers includes 181 individuals of 21 species, bringing this fall's totals to 219 individuals of 21 species. Remember that all dates and numbers from SE Farallon Island are *arrivals* only. Commoner species from Point Reyes are summarized to show the inclusive dates on which at least one individual was present, together with high counts for peak days. These latter data are subject to little subjective judgment; the monthly totals and totals for each periods of occurrence (in parentheses) are my best estimate of the birds actually observed. Furthermore, apparent arrival dates for Point Reyes are less reliable than for SE Farallon, because of the less complete and less consistent coverage of Point Reyes.

Although species diversity was good, the seasonal totals of vagrant warblers were somewhat below our recent average. This may surprise some readers, but remember that most of this season's excitement was concentrated into two good waves and one smaller one and only the largest brought many Warblers to SE Farallon. In fact, warblers were inexplicably low on the island all fall; *no* Chestnut-sides, Blackburnians, Cape Mays, Prairies, Black-throated Greens, Bay-breasteds or Northern Parulas were noted and only one Black-and-white and seven Redstarts were seen this fall. Overall totals were below average for all these arbo-

real genus *Dendroica* (Chestnut-sided to Blackpoll in the table). Only Blackpoll, Magnolia and perhaps Prairie were in roughly average numbers. The highly arboreal Tennessee Warbler was well-represented, especially compared to recent seasons. The terrestrial/understory species, generally rarer here (Ovenbird to end of table), were consistently about average, except that the very rare Mourning Warbler was not found at all and that **five Connecticut Warblers** tied 1974's all-time record.

|   |  |                               |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Tennessee Warbler (total 16; 20 for the fall) |  |                               |
| 4 SE Farallon                                 | Sept. 26 (2), 28, 29   | PRBO                          |
| 10 Point Reyes                                | Sept. 24-27(3), 30(3)  | mob                           |
|   | Oct. 2, 7-8, 10, 16(2)   |                               |
| 1 North Lake, GG Park                         | Sept. 25   | EM, AM, MD, JMS               |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                            | Oct. 7   | AH                            |
| Virginia's Warbler (total 2)                  |  |                               |
| 1 SE Farallon                                 | Oct. 5   | PRBO                          |
| 1 Point Reyes Lthouse                         | Oct. 6-8   | CS, mob                       |
| Northern Parula (total 2)                     |  |                               |
| 1 Fish Docks                                  | Sept. 25-29  | WG, et al.                    |
| 1 near Crystal Springs Res.                   | Sept. 21   | JWhl                          |
| Chestnut-sided Warbler (total 6)              |  |                               |
| 5 Point Reyes                                 | Sept. 25, 25-27, 26(2)   | mob                           |
|   | Oct. 8   |                               |
| 1 North Lake, GG Park                         | Sept. 25   | MD, JMS, EM, AM               |
| Magnolia Warbler (total 9; 14 for fall)       |  |                               |
| 4 SE Farallon                                 | Sept. 20, 26, Oct. 1, 6  | PRBO                          |
| 4 Point Reyes                                 | Sept. 28, Oct. 2, 7-8, 7-9   | mob                           |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                            | Sept. 25   | AH, DM, WK                    |
| Cape May Warbler (total 1; 2 for fall)        |  |                               |
| 1 Nunes Ranch                                 | Sept. 26-30  | RS, LCB, mob                  |
| Black-throated Blue Warbler (total 5)         |  |                               |
| 2 SE Farallon                                 | Sept. 29, Oct. 5   | PRBO                          |
| fem. Lighthouse                               | Oct. 1   | HG, et al.                    |
| fem. Nunes Ranch                              | Oct. 1   | HG, et al.                    |
| fem. Point Reyes Willows                      | Oct. 3   | BR                            |
| Black-throated Green Warbler (total 1)        |  |                               |
| male Battery Wallace                          | Oct. 9   | AE                            |
| Blackburnian Warbler (total 3)                |  |                               |
| Lincoln Park, SF                              | Oct. 1; 2; 7   | AR; AR; AH                    |
| Prairie Warbler (total 3; 5 for fall)         |  |                               |
| 2 Fish Docks                                  | Sept. 25-27; 28-29   | KH, et al., DW,<br>JE, et al. |
| 1 Mendoza                                     | Oct. 6-8   | GH, mob                       |
| Palm Warbler (total 43)                       |  |                               |
| 14 SE Farallon                                | Sept. 25, 28, 29, Oct. 3,<br>4, 6, 7(2), 8, 15, 16(4)  | PRBO                          |
| 25 Point Reyes                                | Sept. 25, Oct. 1(4), 4,<br>6-11(13), 14-16(5), 18,<br>23, (3 On Oct. 6, 4<br>on Oct. 7, 10 and 15) | mob                           |
| 1 Jenner                                      | Sept. 24   | NC, KC                        |
| 1 Point Diablo                                | Sept. 25   | JG                            |
| 1 Golf Course, GG Park                        | Oct. 2   | EM, AM                        |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                            | Oct. 16  | JRo                           |

|  |  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|
| Bay-breasted Warbler (total 1)                   |  |                  |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                               | Sept. 25   | AH               |
| Blackpoll Warbler (total 41; 53 for fall)        |  |                  |
| 15 SE Farallon                                   | Sept. 21, 22, 23, 24,<br>26(2), 28, 29, 30(2),<br>Oct. 1(2), 4, 6, 7                         | PRBO             |
| 17 Point Reyes                                   | Sept. 20-22, 24-29(6),<br>Oct. 1-3(2), 6-10(5),<br>14-15(3), (5 on Sept.<br>26, 4 on Oct. 7) | mob              |
| 1 Battery Wallace                                | Oct. 8   | MW, SFB          |
| 3 Lincoln Park, SF                               | Sept. 25; Oct. 1; 2  | AH, DM, WK;      |
| 2 Middle Lake, GG Park                           | Sept. 24, Oct. 2   | AR; AR<br>EM, AM |
| 1 Buena Vista Park, SF                           | Sept. 30   | AH               |
| 1 Moss Beach, S.M.Co.                            | Oct. 2   | JM               |
| 1 Coyote Hills                                   | Oct. 7-8   | BR, et al.       |
| Black-and-white Warbler (total 7; 9 for fall)    |  |                  |
| 1 SE Farallon                                    | Oct. 10  | PRBO             |
| 4 Nunes Ranch                                    | Sept. 25-26, 27, 29-30,<br>30  | mob              |
| 1 Mendoza Ranch                                  | Sept. 29   | ?                |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                               | Sept. 30   | AH               |
| American Redstart (total 23; 29 for fall)        |  |                  |
| 5 SE Farallon                                    | Sept. 25(2), 27, 29,<br>Oct. 8   | PRBO             |
| 16 Point Reyes                                   | Sept. 25-Oct. 3(13),<br>7-10(3), (3 on Sept.<br>25 5 on Sept. 27)                            | mob              |
| 1 Battery Wallace                                | Sept. 23   | RS               |
| 1 Lincoln Park, SF                               | Sept. 25-Oct. 2  | LE, AR           |
| Ovenbird (total 8; 10 for fall)                  |  |                  |
| 4 SE Farallon                                    | Sept. 25(2), 26, 29  | PRBO             |
| 4 Point Reyes                                    | Sept. 25, 25-28,<br>Oct. 2-9, 3  | mob              |
| Northern Waterthrush (total 3; 5 for fall)       |  |                  |
| 2 SE Farallon                                    | Sept. 26, Oct. 10  | PRBO             |
| 1 Nunes Ranch                                    | Sept. 25   | MF, KH           |
| <b>Connecticut Warbler (total 4; 5 for fall)</b> |  |                  |
| 2 SE Farallon                                    | Sept. 25, Oct. 11  | PRBO             |
| 1 Lighthouse                                     | Sept. 26   | RS, LCB, JD, DT  |
| 1 Nunes Ranch                                    | Oct. 7   | RS, et al.       |
| Hooded Warbler (total 1; 2 for fall)             |  |                  |
| male Point Reyes Willows                         | Sept. 26-27  | RS, et al.       |
| Canada Warbler (total 2)                         |  |                  |
| 1 Lighthouse                                     | Sept. 25   | JM, GP, mob      |
| 1 Middle Lake, GG Park                           | Sept. 24   | EM, AM           |

Yellow-breasted Chats on SE Farallon Sept. 28, Oct. 5 and 15 were late migrants. San Francisco County had seven of the eight Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, including three on SE Farallon Sept. 25(2) and Oct. 3. City singles were at the Archery Field in Golden Gate Park Sept. 24 (DM), Fort Funston Sept. 30 (RT), Lincoln Park Oct. 1 (LE) and one rescued about Oct. 1 (location not reported) and released Oct. 22 near Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park (*fide* MM). The exception was a Rose-breast at Drakes Beach Pond Oct. 3 (BR). Rare coastal Blue Grosbeaks were



at Crespi Pond Sept. 20 (RS, et al.), the Willows Sept. 22 (PLaT) and Abandoned Ranch Oct. 8 (BDP, et al.). A late Indigo Bunting tarried at Mendoza Ranch Oct. 7-8 (RS, mob).

Stray Green-tailed Towhees found SE Farallon Sept. 22 and Point Reyes Lighthouse Sept. 26 (RS, LCB, et al.). American Tree Sparrow sightings briefly at Road Forks Pool Oct. 14 (RS), Fish Docks Oct. 14-15 (RS, et al.) and Point Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 16 (BDP) could have represented only a single individual; these three vagrant traps are adjacent. However, it is likely that two, or all three, were different individuals, because an incredible **nine** Tree Sparrows visited SE Farallon: Oct. 4, 11, 16(2), 18(2), 19, 20(2)! Another stopped in Walnut Creek Oct. 8 (RH, JR, BR, KHi, WO). SE Farallon contributed eight Clay-colored Sparrows: Sept. 25(2), 26, 27, 30, Oct. 4, 16, 18. One at the Point Reyes RCA Station Sept. 28 (DW, JE) was the only mainland report. Farallon Brewer's Sparrows were on Sept. 26, 27, Oct. 1, 11 and Vesper Sparrows on Sept. 21, 26, 27, 29, Oct. 1(3), 2, 5, 15. Mainland Vespers included those at Hall Ranch Sept. 24 (LCB, et al.), Lighthouse parking lot Sept. 28 (PLaT), Lincoln Park Sept. 28 (LE) and Fish Docks Oct. 8 (BDP). Much rarer was the Black-throated Sparrow on SE Farallon Sept. 25.

Lark Buntings arrived on SE Farallon Sept. 21, 22, 30 and Oct. 7, for mostly prolonged stays. Point Reyes Lighthouse had its own Lark Bunting Oct. 2 (CC, mob) and one was found on Angel Island Oct. 9 (MR). An eastern Fox Sparrow brightened Nunes Ranch Sept. 27 (WG, AG, et al.). The season's first Swamp Sparrow was early, Sept. 29 on SE Farallon. Except for first arrivals or late departures, I have not been writing about White-throated Sparrows because it is a regular though quite scarce winter resident in the Bay Area and because many are not reported. However, this fall's heavy flight in the vagrant traps demands mention. Nine on SE Farallon were about twice the average for this period: Sept. 27, Oct. 4(2), 5, 7(2), 11, 12, 16. Eight or more were found on Point Reyes, mostly at Fish Docks and Nunes (mob): Sept. 30, Oct. 8, 11, 14-22 (5 or 6 total, 3 on Oct. 19 and 22). One toured Lincoln Park Oct. 7 (AH) and Rodeo Lagoon caught another Oct. 9 (DT). The only "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco report was from Fish Docks Oct. 18 (BF, JR).

Arrivals of Lapland Longspurs on SE Farallon were widely spaced: Sept. 26, Oct. 3, 5, 10, 16. Five Laps were found at Spaletta Ranch on Point Reyes Oct. 14 (RS), six were counted the next day (RS) and thereafter at least two were present (mob). Nearby singles were noted at Hall Ranch Oct. 15 (JML), Drakes Corner Oct. 21-22 (BY) and one was again discovered at Hayward Regional Shoreline Oct. 16-21 (JM, et al.). Two Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at Spaletta Ranch Oct. 14 (RS) and 23 (DW).

Bobolinks on Sept. 20, 21, 25(2), Oct. 1 and 16 brought the Farallon fall total to eight. Other Bobolinks enlivened Crespi Pond Sept. 20 and Road Forks Pool Oct. 7 (both RS, et al.). The Yellow-headed Blackbird at the mouth of San Lorenzo Creek Sept. 20 (BR) was only locally rare, but the Rusty Blackbird between the Mendoza and Spaletta ranches Oct. 9 (BG, JG, EG, et al.) would have been exciting anywhere in California. Sightings of Orchard Orioles were made at Point Reyes Lighthouse Sept. 22 (RS), Nunes Sept. 26 (RS, LCB) and 29 (PLaT) and Esplanade Park, Pacific Grove, Sept. 21 (RS, et al.), with the latter bird accompanied by a late and scarce coastal migrant Hooded Oriole (RS, et al.). Eight Red Crossbills passed Point Diablo Sept. 25 (JG) and one dropped in at Point Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 2 (AH).

**Observers:** Stephen F. Bailey, Bruce Barrett, Laurence C. Binford, Tupper Ansel Blake, Kurt Campbell, Chris Carpenter, Ted Chandik, Graham Chisholm, Nancy Conzett, Maryanne Danielson, John Dillon, Bob Dyer, David Edwards, Al Eisner, Lee Elias, Jules Evens, Carter Faust, Gary Fellers, Mark Fenner, Bud Fry, Albert Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Phil Gordon, Ed Greaves, Helen Green, Jeff Greenhouse, Donald Gregory, Betty Gross, Kem Hainebach (KH), John Hall, Kevin Hints (KHi), Alan Hopkins, Ralph Hudgins, George Hugenberg, Richard Jeffers, Dick Johnson, Kenn Kaufman, Woody Kuehn, Jeri M. Langham, Peter Larkin, Peter LaTourrette, Robin Leong, Donna Lion, Akiko Makishima, Eugene Makishima, Mary Markinson, Robin May, Guy McCaskie, many observers (mob), Joseph Morlan, Dan Murphy, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon reports thanks to Keith Hansen and Peter White), Winnifred Orcutt, Benjamin D. Parmeter, George Peyton, Lina Prairie, David Rice, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond (JR), Alan Ridley (ARi), Marius Robinson, Alan Royer (AR), Jim Royer (JRo), Don Schmoldt, David Sedgin, Craig Sells, Debra Love Shearwater, Dianne Sierra, Rich Sintchak, Arnold Small, Jean Marie Spoelman, Rich Stallcup (RS), Ron Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Bette Wentzel, Jack Whetstone, Jake Whitmore (JWhi), Mike Wihler, David Wimpfheimer, Jon Winter (JW), David Yee, Bob Yutzy, Jon Zablackis, Joan Zawaski (JZ).

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## Conservation Notes

### CRISIS ON THE BAY

In 1965, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) was created, partly in response to an attempt by the West Bay Associates Company to level San Bruno Mountain and use it



to fill in the southern end of San Francisco Bay. The public outcry over this proposed development project made possible the passing of the McAteer-Petris Act which charged BCDC with the "conservation of the water of S.F. Bay" and gave it jurisdiction over the Bay and a band of shoreline 100 feet wide. Since its inception, BCDC has been able to protect the bay and its wildlife habitats through a process called *mitigation*, by which a developer who wishes to fill in part of the Bay must return some part of the shoreline land to the Bay. If a marsh, or other wildlife habitat, is to be destroyed, the developer will usually be required to develop a new marsh elsewhere. The key word is "balance"—between development and conservation or, as the law actually states, "filling S.F. Bay should be authorized only when public benefits from fill clearly exceed public detriments."

Although the mitigation concept is clearly essential to the protection of the Bay and its wildlife habitats, it is currently being seriously threatened. Governor Deukmejian has appointed five new members to the Commission, including a new chairman, John Reading, and a new vice chairman, John Dustin. All five (replacing five commissioners with a long history of mitigation support) in the short time they have been on the Commission have clearly indicated pro-development, no-mitigation attitudes. At a recent Commission meeting two development projects requiring mitigation were to be approved. Instead, these new members were in the forefront of an attempt to eliminate or reduce the amount of mitigation required even though, in one case, the developer testified that *he* thought the mitigation required of him was proper and in no way excessive.

Dustin, a real estate consultant, perhaps typifies this new attitude. His position is that on the development side BCDC has been chronically under represented and this has subjected developers to bureaucratic obstructionism. In fact, in 1982 BCDC approved \$379 million of development activity and did not reject a single development permit application. Dustin says that he represents the private sector in the developmental process. However, this Commission was instituted to protect the public from "haphazard" private development and to make sure "public benefits . . . clearly exceed public detriments." Thus, a commissioner, by the very statutes of the law, should obviously represent the public sector. Finally, Dustin has suggested that in some cases the best thing for BCDC to do is nothing at all. If this idea had been followed in 1965, we would have no South Bay.

These new appointees have yet to be confirmed by our State Senate. The first step in this confirmation process will be a hearing held by the Senate Rules Committee, whose members are Senator Nicholas Petris (Oakland), co-author of BCDC's initial legislation, and Senators Henry



Mello, David Roberti, Ray Johnson and William Craven. This hearing will take place sometime in January and the senators will consider carefully any comments you might wish to make on this subject. They can be reached at the State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

### CONSERVATION COMMITTEE WELCOMES YOU

If you have any further questions about this or any other conservation issue the next Conservation Committee meeting will be held on Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the GGAS office.

—ART FEINSTEIN, *Chairman*

### New Publication

The United Nations' first international conference on population was held in Bucharest in 1974 and a second was held in Mexico City in August, 1983. Progress made during the nine years since Bucharest and the role of nongovernmental organizations in the conference were reviewed in New York last winter at a UN briefing chaired by Frances Breed, National Audubon's population program manager. A 32-page summary of that briefing, "Population and the Future," is available for \$3 from Breed at the society's headquarters.

## Christmas Count Dinners

We will do something different this year. Instead of a potluck spread after the count, we'll have a catered meal. **Reservations are required.** Yvonne Donner of the Sierra Club is the caterer for both San Francisco and Oakland and the menu will be the same. The charge is to be \$3.50 per person for soup, salad and dessert — minestrone and/or clam chowder, salad bar and carrot cake. Plates, utensils, coffee or tea furnished.

### OAKLAND

The place is the same: Trinity United Methodist Church of Berkeley, Dana and Bancroft Way, enter the hall on Bancroft.

### SAN FRANCISCO

Dinner and tabulation will be at the Sport Center near the Boat House, Lake Merced, Harding Rd. and Skyline. From 19th Ave. and Sloat Blvd. go west on Sloat to 39th Ave., left on 39th to Skyline, left on Harding Dr. to the Sport Center.

### RESERVATIONS

Please send your check (\$3.50 per person) payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society to Hazel Houston, 3021 Revere Ave., Oakland, CA 94605 by December 10 or call her at 635-7347. Remember, Yvonne needs a head count to plan accurately.

## Oakland Christmas Count

Sunday, Dec. 18, GGAS will sponsor the annual Oakland Christmas Bird Count. Whether you are an expert or just learning, do come out. The count is a great place to learn basics or to polish skills. Letters have been sent to recent participants; if you haven't been involved for three years (or haven't received a letter) write or call GGAS at 843-2222. Final information on the compilation and all other details will be sent to all who have indicated plans to turn up.

Whether you want only to count the birds in your yard for a few hours or you never go anywhere without "*Roberson*" (*Rare Birds of the West Coast*) we need your participation.

## From the Oakland Count's New Compiler

The Oakland count has always been special; in a class by itself due to great participation — by both birders and birds.

About ten years ago the count underwent a tremendous improvement under able leadership, growing suddenly from a very modest count to one of Northern California's best, by any measure. Since that time there has been frequent turnover in leadership, with the count making a steady though not disastrous backslide.

In taking responsibility for the Oakland count this year, I am committing myself to stay with the count for at least several years; I have skill, experience, enthusiasm and many ideas for the count. I can greatly improve the structure of the count; I can make it more productive and more fun, but I will not succeed in these efforts without help and support from the huge community of birders in the Bay Area.

Please drop a card to the GGAS office and plan to help on Sunday, Dec. 18. More, please write to me with your wishes, ideas and complaints. I'll attend to every line and reply (in time), though *this* year's count won't change much due to the time. You'll be hearing more as I keep you posted through *The Gull*.

—KURT CAMPBELL, *Compiler*

## San Francisco Christmas Count

On Wednesday, Dec. 21, GGAS will initiate the all-new San Francisco Christmas Count. Join us in this exciting venture which will cover San Francisco and northern San Mateo County including San Bruno Mountain, bay and ocean waters and shoreline, many urban parks and squares, golf courses and extensive residential areas. We need your help for owling, birding all day, counting at backyard feeders and covering small parks and squares in residential, business and industrial areas. These

areas are ideal for birders who can only get out before work or during lunch hour. We need a boat to cover the bay as well as one to cover the ocean. The fee for this count is \$2 and the catered dinner is an additional \$3.50. If you can participate call Dan Murphy at 564-0074 (evenings) or Hillary Hulen at the GGAS office at 843-2222 (days).

## Birding in Los Banos

This is a reminder that the Los Banos Christmas Count depends upon help from outside the area and that in addition to the rare winter species mentioned in the November *Gull* there are others to entice participation: Emperor Goose and Surf Scoter and many more. This reminder is made with the hope of getting increased interest in the very good birding this area provides. People who have helped in the past have also spoken of the Basque food that accompanies the end-of-the-day tabulation. Save **Tuesday, Dec. 27** for Los Banos. For details call or write GGAS or call Kurt Campbell at (707) 664-0104. Car pooling arrangements can be made.

## Creative Cooks

You have heard about the first annual GGAS Birding Christmas Cookie bakeoff? You can show off your skills at the December general meeting and win prizes for your efforts. The prizes include copies of *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay* and *Birds of Northern California* and beautiful color prints by wildlife artist Robert Campbell of egrets and terns. There will be a special prize for "best of show." Cooks may enter bird cookies for competition in the following categories:

1. songbirds
2. shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors
3. rare birds (?)

### Official Rules

Participants may enter as many different cookies as they wish as long as they bring a few extra for snacks at the meeting.

Any degree of decoration is allowed as long as the result qualifies as an edible entry and represents a bird.

Entries should be brought to the Wrubel Gallery in the Nature Company Store (see p. 177 for directions) between 6:30 and 7 p.m. so they may be on display for all members to see.



Winners will be announced during the Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing. The judging committee includes a biologist, an artist, a GGAS board member and will be completed with two GGAS members. If you would like to judge or can help with hospitality at the meeting call the GGAS office, 843-2222.

## At Mono Lake

We have all heard about the resurgence of life at Mono Lake this year. Now Mono Lake lives in a stunning 80-page collection of photographs titled *At Mono Lake*. The book, which contains 66 photographs, 17 in color, was published to coincide with an exhibition recently shown at the California Academy of Science.

The book is unique in treating the history of landscape photography as a record of the Mono Basin itself. Among the photographers represented are Timothy O'Sullivan, Ansel Adams, Philip Hyde, Edward and Brett Weston and Galen Rowell.

This beautiful book makes an ideal holiday gift as well as a gift for the lake because proceeds from sales will fund future educational programs. Available for \$12.95 at many Bay Area bookstores or direct from the Mono Lake Committee, 956-7532. Audubon members receive a 10% discount through the committee.

## Audubon Camp in the West

The Marjorie Milner Atkinson Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually by GGAS to a person who is committed to conservation and protection of wildlife and the environment. The scholarship pays the costs of participation in the two-week Audubon Camp in the West.

Applicants might be a student who plans a career in the natural sciences or an older person who has devoted his or her life to conservation efforts or someone in between. Applicants should request an application form from the GGAS office. Anyone over the age of 18 may apply.

Audubon Camp in the West is situated in the Wind River Mountains near Dubois, Wyoming. The surroundings are spectacular and the program includes environmental field studies for adults. The December GGAS meeting will include a ten-minute description of the program with slides of the camp.

## Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing Dec. 8

The date of the Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing is fast approaching, but there is still time to purchase tickets. There are 50 prizes, 50 chances to win, and each drawing ticket has a discount coupon good at the Round Table Pizza. All proceeds will benefit GGAS activities and programs and Bay Area conservation efforts.

The grand prizes include:

*Dipper* by Robert Bateman

*Scarlet Tanager* by Roger Tory Peterson

*Canvasback* by Heiner Hirtling

*Snow Geese* by John Ruthven

*Canvasback* (duck stamp print) by Robert Steiner

Don't put it off too long. Buy your ticket and give a gift to GGAS and perhaps you will win a lovely holiday gift yourself. And don't forget to attend the Dec. 8 meeting.

### *Benefit Drawing*

Name.....

Address.....

..... Zip.....

Telephone.....

Number of Tickets (\$1.00 each or 6/\$5.00) .....

Amount Enclosed .....

Yes, I would like to help support GGAS and will sell tickets.

Please send me ..... tickets.

Please send this form plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

2718 Telegraph Avenue, #206, Berkeley, CA 94705

## The Back Yard Birder

The thrill of seeing a Peregrine Falcon lies before me. There is a possibility, however, thanks to the tremendous efforts of falconers and scientists. This magnificent bird is slowly gaining in numbers since its rapid decline and placement on the endangered species list. Before the ban of certain pesticides (DDT in particular) the numbers of Brown Pelican, Osprey, Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon dropped drastically.

These birds at the top of the food chain, who are eaters of fish and of birds that in turn have fed on contaminated fish or insects, tend to suffer from the effects of chemicals more than rodent eaters. The chemicals affect birds by interfering with the enzyme-hormone balance that controls calcium production for eggshells. Contaminated birds lay eggs with shells so thin that the eggs break when the birds sit on them.

The Peregrine Project based at the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, in cooperation with the National Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been engaged in a very successful program whereby captive Peregrines are induced to lay eggs. These eggs are then artificially incubated and the chicks are reared for 30 days before being placed in the wild and fed by unseen humans until they fledge. It has been hoped that released Peregrines will re-establish nesting sites at eyries which were historically known to be used in the past. In New York and in Massachusetts this practice hasn't been as successful as hoped. The chief reason seems to be habitat change which has occurred over the years. The open cliff faces preferred by falcons have become heavily timbered. Also the entire countryside is densely wooded when 50 years ago there was open farmland suited to the birds' style of hunting.

Oddly, some of the most successful of the released Peregrines have become city dwellers. Public education has helped immensely. New York City remains supreme with at least three nesting pairs. Despite the roar of traffic overhead, a pair established a nest in road cinders under a well-protected part of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Several other pairs have been noted at other bridge sites, leading one to believe that the birds have found their own answer of where to live. There is a similarity of bridges to cliffs overhanging lakes or rivers, plus pigeons (a favorite food) abound near bridges. Tall buildings on the East Coast and in Los Angeles have also become popular falcon eyries for the same reasons bridges are alluring. For six years Scarlett, a released female, has been in residence on the 33rd floor of a skyscraper in Baltimore. During this last spring and summer she has been seen in the company of an unbanded adult male. He remains aloof, but may be the mate she has been awaiting so long.

These captive-reared birds are of mixed genetic stock and are not "pure." The parents originate from such diverse places as arctic and boreal Alaska, Labrador, California, Colorado, Scotland and Spain. And yet, these "mongrels" have adapted well and evidence known habitats and behavior of the old "duck hawks."

The Peregrine Project takes place in Santa Cruz on the West Coast; Ft. Collins, Colorado, in the Rocky Mountains and at Ithaca, New York, in the east. The North American Falconers Association has also generously provided young falcons from their breeding programs for release.



Because falcons do not recognize state or regional lines many of those released have shown up in far-flung places. One bird freed in Idaho was sighted near Los Angeles!

If you wish to help, send a tax-deductible donation to the Peregrine Fund, 159 Sapsucker Woods Rd., Ithaca, NY 14853. You may wish to specify the area you wish to support (east, west, or Rocky Mountains).

—MEG PAULETICH

## A New Field Guide

*Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, published by the National Geographic Society - 1983. \$13.95

Chandler Robbins, step aside. Roger Peterson, look to your laurels. The National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* has been published and it sets a standard others will find hard to equal, let alone surpass. As a friend who is a relatively new birder exclaimed, "These pictures really look like the birds!"

The quality of this book is all the more remarkable in that it was put together by a committee. Jon L. Dunn and Eirik A. T. Blom are listed as chief consultants, but the complete tally of those involved takes up two columns of fine print—and that doesn't even include the 13 artists.

The guide is completely up-to-date, including all the latest "splits" and "lumpings" of species, and generally following the new taxonomic order. The new names are used, but old ones are listed in the index. Rarities found in Alaska, the Southwest and elsewhere are all included, save for a few (such as the Hoopoe) that have been found in this country only once. The range maps, as in Robbins, are conveniently located facing the plates, but they are clearer than in Robbins' first edition and the occurrence of eastern species (such as warblers) in the West is noted in the text.

But what about the artwork? On the whole, it is superlative. Donald Malick's hawks and large woodpeckers fairly leap off the page. Chuck Ripper's alcids are also full of vitality. Some of the other plates (notably cuckoos) are a little stiff, but quite adequate for identification purposes. The varying styles blend surprisingly well.

As for field marks, local birders will be pleasantly surprised to see an Orange-crowned Warbler that looks like *our* Orange-crowned Warbler. Our "Bicolored" Redwinged Blackbird is shown too—both sexes. And newcomers to the Bay Area need no longer agonize, as I did, over all those gulls that are too dark to be Herrings and too light to be Westerns. This is the first major guide that shows our light-backed race of Western Gull. Three races of White-crowned Sparrow and no fewer than *six* of the Fox Sparrow are illustrated. Despite this unique thoroughness, the guide is still small enough to be easily carried afield.

One could hardly expect such a large project to be perfect and I have found some flaws. It is surprising to read that the head of the adult Western Gull in winter is "moderately streaked with brown"; the experts I have talked with consider such streaking to be an indication of some Glaucous-winged ancestry. H. Douglas Pratt missed a chance to show the very drab, unstreaked spring plumage of the Sage Thrasher that can be so confusing and his Long-Billed Thrasher looks a little too ruddy on the back; it should contrast more with the tail. I believe both races of Lesser Golden Plover, not just *fulva*, winter occasionally on the West Coast. And the Gray-tailed Tattler can, alas, look even more like the Wandering than John Pitcher's lively plate indicates. (The differing calls are correctly given.)

These and other errors which will doubtless turn up are trivial compared with the guide's general excellence. If you're not a member of the National Geographic Society better get acquainted with someone who is. The Society has not sold its publications through bookstores in the past and it has no indication of making an exception for this one. The GGAS library has a copy on order, but you will want one of your own and it is worth every penny.

A word on the revised edition of Robbins: *Don't*. Except for the new range maps, it is very little improved over the first edition. Get the National Geographic Society guide instead.

—CHRISTINE JONES, GGAS Librarian

## Save San Francisco Bay Conference

The Save San Francisco Bay Association will hold its 1983 biennial conference on December 10 from 9 to 3 at the School of Law, Boalt Hall, on the UC campus. The morning session will begin with a brief business meeting. The "State of the Bay" address will follow, to be given by Alan Pendleton, director of BCDC.

New appointees to BCDC have been invited to comment on the public's role at BCDC and to receive questions from the audience. The new commissioners will be introduced by Dwight Steele, SSFBA vice-president, who will moderate the question-and-answer session.

Highlighting the morning session will be a panel discussion of "Toxic Discharges into the Bay." The magnitude of the problem and what can be done about it will be discussed by Roger James, Regional Water Quality Control Board; Michael Belliveau, Citizens for a Better Environment, and Pete Williams, Richmond Chevron Refinery.

The afternoon session will offer workshops for each county around the bay. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about the issues in their own areas and to discuss them with other concerned people and with resource guests.

The conference is open to all interested. Non-members are especially encouraged to attend and learn more about the bay and the association. Registration is \$4.75, which covers background information and a box lunch. For more information phone 849-3044 or 849-3053.

## Help GGAS

Audubon is much more than a spectator sport. For GGAS to thrive and maintain an active role in the environmental community we need help. Elsewhere in this issue we are calling attention to the fact that because of mid-year resignations the Program Committee is without members. For some time we have lacked an Education Committee. It must be because we haven't asked you in the right way. On the back of your *Gull* the committee chairmen and officers are listed. Everyone has talents in different areas. As active birders we are all learning—the learning can be enhanced if we are involved in the work of the organization. There are phones to answer, letters to write, books and patches to sell and there will soon be an office computer that will require trained operators. There are field trips to be led, programs to be planned, group activities with children or adults to be developed. There are Christmas Counts that need help, hearings to attend, talks to be given. Please involve yourself in your GGAS and call a committee chairman or Hillary Hulen today. There is something that you can do that needs doing.

When active birder Nancy Conzett tired of editing *The Gull*, which she had done for four years, she asked for a volunteer replacement to step forward. When I volunteered I was surprised at how rewarding the task was. There must be lots of retired men and women in our readership who could give of their time and would enjoy the activities. But we don't need only the retired people. If you have a little time, why not give it to your organization?

## College of Alameda Offering

**Marine Mammals of California**, from January 4 through March 21, includes six Saturday excursions to places near the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as lectures Wednesday evenings 7-10.

The excursions will give students an opportunity to observe marine mammals in their natural habitat. One of the highlights is an all-day boat trip in Monterey Bay to observe dolphins, porpoises and California Gray Whales during their southerly migration. Other trips will include observation of the mammoth Northern Elephant Seals, Harbor Seals, Sea Lions and Sea Otters.

College of Alameda is located at 555 Atlantic Ave. in the City of Alameda. For more information call 522-7221, ext. 297.



## Bird Classes

**Dr. Stephen F. Bailey** will teach two of his most popular GGAS-sponsored courses at Albany Adult School this winter.

**Gull Identification** means the identification of both gull species and ages. Steve will present the plumages and the identification marks plus the seasonal status and distribution of the Northern California species. This difficult subject will be clarified through examination of patterns and natural variation; i.e., identification by integrated understanding, not over-simplified rules. The course has been expanded to ten weeks. Slide lectures will be 7-9 p.m. on Tuesdays from Jan. 3 to March 6. Optional field sessions will be offered if demand is sufficient.

**Owls** will cover many facets of all 13 Northern California owls. Natural history information will include foraging ecology and behavior, status and habitat distribution. Both lectures and field trips will emphasize finding and identifying these owls by sight and sound, day and night. The four slide/tape sessions will be 7-9 p.m. on alternate Thursdays starting Jan. 12. One day and one evening field trip are included. Last time we saw six species of owls on the daylight field trip!

For more information call Steve at 548-9507. For registration information call Albany Adult School at 526-6811.

## PRBO Class on Robbins' New Edition

Point Reyes Bird Observatory is offering a Bird School to be taught by Rich Stallcup on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Jan. 10, 12, 17 and 19.

The new *Birds of North America*, by Robbins et al., has now appeared with improved text and maps. However, most of the pictures remain from the earlier editions and many of these are misleading or simply wrong. During these four evening sessions we will review this book page by page, writing and sketching in corrections with slides, graphics and study skins for assistance. Rich was instrumental in revising the text for this edition and will share his specific comments and updated information. \$10 each evening. For more information contact Linda Parker at PRBO, 415-868-1221.

## PRBO-Sponsored Mexican Trip

This trip combines seeing tropical birds, becoming aware of the plight of Mexico's tropical forests and learning about Mexican culture. Palenque and San Cristobal, Feb. 11-19, and an extension to Lake Catemaco, Feb. 19-24, are offered. Palenque is known for its pre-classic Mayan ruins and San Cristobal for its colorful and varied mountain Indian culture. Both are famous places to observe wildlife. Between the tropical rain forests

of Palenque and the montane cloud forests of the San Cristobal area over 500 species of birds may be found. For details phone Point Reyes Bird Observatory at 868-1221.

## Cooper Society Research Seminar

On Monday, Dec. 5, Dr. Jared Verner of the U.S. Forest Service will present a seminar entitled "How Accurate are Point-count and Transect Methods for Estimating Densities of Birds?"

Dr. Verner has a distinguished and diverse background in ornithological research and has recently devoted much attention to bird count methods. His critique should prove relevant and enlightening to anyone who has tried to count birds accurately.

The presentation will be in room 2503, Life Sciences Bldg., UC—Berkeley at 8 p.m. It will be preceded at 7:45 by a brief business meeting of the Northern California Chapter of the Cooper Ornithological Society. Everyone interested in birds is encouraged to attend.

## Help Build the Program Committee

GGAS needs the help of persons interested in programs. If you have enjoyed our programs in the past and are ready to give a little of your time to continue them call Hillary Hulen at the GGAS office (843-2222) or Dan Murphy (564-0074). The chairman of this committee serves on the GGAS Board of Directors.

## From the Ranch

The 1983 Annual Meeting of Audubon Canyon Ranch was held Oct. 15 at Picher Canyon. A large turnout of board members produced the following officers for 1983-84:

*Chairman* — Robert Conrath, GGAS

*1st Vice Chairman* — Flora MacLise, Madrone

*2nd Vice Chairman* — Thomas Price, Marin

*Treasurer* — Ed McElhany, Sequoia

*Other Vice Chairmen* — Clifford Conly

Jane Ferguson

George Peyton

Clerin Zumwalt

The Docent Council reported that in the fall of 1982 45 docents visited 12 Bay Area schools and worked with 365 children and that in the spring of 1983 90 docents worked with 58 schools and 2,185 children.

Helen Pratt reported that the heron colony, after suffering a devastation by raccoon predation of 50 nests containing eggs and young, recouped and raised 117 Egrets and 21 Great Blue Herons.

—CLIFFORD CONLY, JR.

# Mount Diablo

Save Mount Diablo Inc., a nonprofit organization endorsed by Diablo Audubon, has the opportunity to add a mile-long 360-acre parcel of land to the present Mount Diablo State Park. The owners of the land, San Miguel Partners, will donate 80 acres and sell the rest to the organization. The land includes grasslands with oaks and supports a bird population. GGAS supports this acquisition project and suggests that interested members send a tax-deductible donation. Please use the coupon below and make your check payable to Save Mount Diablo.

To: Save Mount Diablo, Inc.  
P.O. Box 25  
Concord, CA 94522

From: .....  
.....  
.....

Here is my tax-deductible donation of \$ .....  
to help save Mount Diablo from development.

Courtesy of Golden Gate Audubon

## GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

### FOR GGAS

### Gift of

In memory of  
James Flater

Norman and Sharleen Zumsteg  
The Dan Brodies

In memory of  
William Zumsteg  
Mrs. Cora Moore

The Dan Brodies  
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Ricci

### FOR AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

In Memory of  
Starker Leopold

Paul F. Covel

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. to Minnie Groshong, Corresponding Secretary, Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705-1179. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Corresponding Secretary.





Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.  
Office: 843-2222  
2718 Telegraph Avenue, #206  
Berkeley, California 94705  
Return Postage Guaranteed

Library  
Calif. Academy of Sciences  
Golden Gate Park  
San Francisco, CA, 94118

## THE GULL

December 1983

### OFFICERS

President, Dan Murphy (564-0074)\*  
First Vice President, Trudi Jackson (548-1352)\*  
Second Vice President, Shirley Kelly (387-8290)\*  
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Corresponding Secretary, Minnie Groshong (526-8443)\*  
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Art Feinstein (282-5937)\*  
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John Nutt (654-3336)\*  
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Jon Zablackis (642-9121, days)\*

### STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:

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Field Trips, Shirley Kelly (387-8290)\*  
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and Joseph Morlan (524-7421)  
Librarian, Christine Jones (929-0327)  
Executive Director, Hillary Hulen (843-2222)  
\*Member of the Board of Directors

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) 843-2211  
Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$25 per year (individual); \$32 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$8. per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$15 per year. Senior citizen individual \$17, senior citizen family \$19. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**